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FLOOR DEBATE

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you all for your expressions of concern. My wife is doing well following the surgery yesterday and things are looking very positive, so I just want to thank you for all the comments and questions and notes so I appreciate that. I want to follow up on what Senator Coordsen has described in his opening a little bit. I want to just talk for a moment especially for the senators who weren't here the last couple of years about the process and the steps that have been taken to arrive at where we are today. And I might say that I am very...I'm very comfortable and very pleased with the process and the steps that have been taken up to this point. And I think we have in place, in what Senator Coordsen has described, a very good road map for us to follow this session as we do the...probably one of the most difficult tasks that we will undertake during our careers here in the Legislature, and that is to not only draw those district boundary lines for everyone else that's affected but also for ourselves. And that makes it especially sensitive for each of you. Last year I had a bill which set out a good share of the administrative and substantive guidelines that I felt the Legislature should start to talk about. Through the session and through discussions with many of the senators, I became convinced that it wasn't the best idea to embody that in a bill, but rather to pass a resolution of intent last spring which confirmed the establishment of the task force, reconfirmed that which the Executive Board had undertaken during the last session. We passed a resolution last session without any dissenting votes and the task force worked on procedure, primarily administrative guidelines and then the substantive guidelines that Senator Coordsen has described to you today that are embodied in this LR 7. I think we had a good representation of our entire body on that task force that worked on that this summer. We had a lot of good work done by not only the Research Office but the new people in the Research Office that are going to be actually physically working on drawing the maps. And I am going to tell you that I think if we stick with a couple ideas in mind we'll get through this in as good a shape as possible. Number one, we're going to keep this process open to all of the members so that each of us have a chance for our ideas and our input; and that will happen under the process that Senator Coordsen has described. There will even be in the...attached to the Research Office there will be a couple of computers that